

ADVANCE

A U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Program

The Advance Program is a collaborative effort by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), states, tribes and local governments to encourage emission reductions in attainment areas, to help them continue to meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone and fine particles (PM_{2.5}). Attainment areas are those areas that are currently designated as meeting the NAAQS. Through the Advance Program, states, tribes, and local governments work with EPA to take near-term steps to improve local air quality and ensure continued health protection over the long term. Their efforts will reduce air pollution and could provide an improved buffer against future air quality violations.

Ozone Advance began in April 2012 and focuses on maintaining the ozone standards, while PM Advance began in January 2013 and emphasizes maintenance of the PM_{2.5} standards. Areas that join both Ozone and PM Advance are interested in pursuing multi-pollutant reductions.

The Advance Program is flexible in the sense that participants determine their own goals and the measures they want to implement in order to reach them. However, the Program does not include regulatory flexibilities. As a result, it differs from prior initiatives such as Early Action Compacts. Although there are no guarantees that participation will prevent a nonattainment designation from ever occurring, the actions taken as part of Advance could better position an area to handle nonattainment requirements if they ever do apply.

Why are early efforts to reduce ozone/PM_{2.5} important?

It makes sense to take local steps to reduce air pollution voluntarily, before pursuing reductions becomes a requirement:

- Further improving air quality in attainment areas can help to ensure continued health protection.
- Proactive efforts to improve air quality could better position some areas to stay in attainment. Or, if an area is eventually designated nonattainment, these efforts could either (1) provide needed reductions that could result in a lower classification and/or (2) feed into a future State Implementation Plan (SIP).
- Reductions targeting one pollutant often result in multi-pollutant co-benefits.
- Early steps to keep the air clean are generally less costly and burdensome than the steps that must be taken once a nonattainment designation has occurred.

- Areas working voluntarily to reduce air pollution have more flexibility to choose measures that make sense to them; once a nonattainment designation has occurred, less flexibility is available.

Who is participating?

A wide variety of states and local governments are currently participating in Advance, and one tribe has joined. These entities are participating with respect to areas that are as large as entire states or as small as single counties. Most are participating in Ozone Advance, others in PM Advance, and some have opted to join both programs.

What are they doing?

Each Advance area develops a plan or “path forward” for improving local air quality, implements the measures and programs in their path forward, and revisits their path forward periodically to expand and update it. Advance participants are implementing an array of mobile source and energy efficiency programs, point and area source-related efforts, wood smoke reduction and green infrastructure measures, as well as air quality awareness and education programs. To learn more about current Advance participants’ efforts, see:

Ozone Advance - <http://www.epa.gov/ozonepmadvance/participants.html>

PM Advance - <http://www.epa.gov/ozonepmadvance/participantsPM.html>

Can I Participate?

It is not too late to join! Review the program guidance to learn more about how to sign up.

Ozone Advance: www.epa.gov/ozonepmadvance/pdfs/2012404guidance.pdf

PM Advance: www.epa.gov/ozonepmadvance/pdfs/20130107PMmemo-guidance.pdf

More information

Advance Program website: www.epa.gov/ozonepmadvance

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